



Australia is a continent unto itself, and therefore the landscape differs from coast to coast. To drive across is extremely difficult because in the center of this continent lies the great Australian desert. However, if you would like a great adventure, take the train from Perth on the west coast to Melbourne or Sydney on the east coast and see the whole country up close. The travel time varies from season to season. This is a great way to meet new people.

Customs

Australians hardly ever refer to themselves as “Aussies” but seldom take offense at the term. In general, Australians can be quite carefree and hope you will be the same. Look forward to a backslap, a rigorous handshake and sometimes a course remark when introduced; it’s how they let you know they like you. Keep in mind that ribbing and friendly rowdiness is all a part of being accepted. Australians are very warm and friendly people, but they also have distinct social customs. Like anywhere else, when and to whom and how you do anything makes the difference. When speaking, refrain from talking about religion or politics. Use caution in winking at women; it can be regarded as shockingly presumptuous. Never perform the gladiatorial “thumbs-up” gesture with an upward motion because, in spite of its popularity in other countries, here it is an obscene remark. Always be prompt, controlled and friendly and you won’t go wrong. When invited to visit a private home, you will probably be greeted in a most friendly and jovial manner. Flowers, wine or a small gift are a gracious thank-you to bring with you to present to your hosts.

Attractions

As you would expect in any large country, there are numerous educational, cultural and athletic events for you to enjoy as either a participant or spectator. If you have an opportunity to go to an Australian Rules Football match, you are going to see a most unusual yet exciting game. You may find U.S. football dull in comparison, The sailing, water skiing or surfing in Australian waters is some the the best anywhere.

Internationally renowned opera singers, pop music entertainers and stage, screen or television stars have helped Australia become more prominent around the world.

The Lingo

Australians speak English combined with their own clever slang. With some practice, you will figure out this “lingo”; but not being able to speak like a “local” won’t prevent you from enjoying your tour “Down Under.”

Just remember to make room for the cuddly koalas and kangaroos that will now be part of your everyday life. G’day Mate!

For more information, contact the
Relocation Assistance Program
located at your nearest Family Service Center